

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION
(PCT Rule 61.2)Date of mailing (day/month/year)
26 July 2001 (26.07.01)To:
Commissioner
US Department of Commerce
United States Patent and Trademark
Office, PCT
2011 South Clark Place Room
CP2/5C24
Arlington, VA 22202
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

in its capacity as elected Office

International application No.
PCT/EP00/11244Applicant's or agent's file reference
131038International filing date (day/month/year)
17 October 2000 (17.10.00)Priority date (day/month/year)
29 October 1999 (29.10.99)

Applicant

BIANCHI, Lucia et al

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made: in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

17 May 2001 (17.05.01)

 in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:2. The election was was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 131.038	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/EP00/11244	International filing date (day/month/year) 17/10/2000	Priority date (day/month/year) 29/10/1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC H04J3/08		
<p>Applicant ALCATEL et al.</p> <p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 7 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of 3 sheets.</p> <p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority III <input type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement VI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited VII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application VIII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application 		

Date of submission of the demand 17/05/2001	Date of completion of this report 03.01.2002
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority: European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Liebhart, M Telephone No. +49 89 2399 7598



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/EP00/11244

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):
Description, pages:

1-10 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-11 with telefax of 07/12/2001

Drawings, sheets:

1/4-4/4 as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- contained in the international application in written form.
- filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- the description, pages:
- the claims, Nos.:

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the drawings, sheets:

5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):
(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims 1-11
	No: Claims
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims 1-11
	No: Claims
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims 1-11
	No: Claims

2. Citations and explanations
see separate sheet

VI. Certain documents cited

1. Certain published documents (Rule 70.10)

and / or

2. Non-written disclosures (Rule 70.9)

see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:
see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:
see separate sheet

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**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

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Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: EP-A-0 804 001 (HITACHI LTD) 29 October 1997 (1997-10-29)
D2: "ITU-T RECOMMENDATION G.841", Oct. 1998

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

The invention (**claim 1**) relates to a method for signaling failures in a Multiplexed-Shared Protection Ring telecommunication (MS-SPRING) network, which generally is characterised by a ring-configuration and a failure protection through a particular and standardized protection mechanism.

The closest prior art available is D2 which discloses types and characteristics of SDH network protection architectures, including MS-SPRING networks. The protection mechanism executes a "Bridge & Switch" operation when a failure (Signal Fail, SF) affects a ring. In certain situations, i.e. failures affecting the connections on the same span, the corresponding node can not be properly informed about the state of its connections. As a consequence, the protection controller located in said node, executing the Automatic Protection Switching (APS), attempts to suppress and subsequently restore a Switch. In the event of a failure, this operation appears like an undesired transient.

The inventive method differs from the closest prior art in that it further provides a step, carried out by a network element receiving an SF signaling on an incoming span and being in a Lockout Of Working Channel state, of sending proper protection words in opposite directions through the ring network.

Thus the undesired transient of the protection controller in the event of a lockout command of the working channel can be avoided.

Document D1 which discloses a self-healing network differs from the invention, in that a) it is not dealing with MS-SPRING networks and their particular protection mechanism,

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- b) the receiving node is not in a Lockout or Working Channel state, and
- c) coded protection words are not sent in opposite directions.

No indication of such a concept is given in any other available prior art document. Therefore the subject-matter of claim 1 is new and involves an inventive step (Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT).

The invention further relates to a network element (**independent claim 6**) and telecommunication network (**independent claim 10**) providing corresponding means to carry out the method steps of claim 1.

Finally the invention relates to a telecommunication frame (**independent claim 11**) which has a special arrangement of the signaling bytes (K1 and K2) in order to support the inventive concept.

Therefore the subject-matter of independent claims 6, 10 and 11 is new and involves an inventive step (Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT).

The remaining claims 2-5 and 7-9 are dependent on claims 1 and 6 respectively and therefore meet the requirements concerning novelty and inventive step (Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT).

Re Item VI

Certain documents cited

Certain published documents (Rule 70.10)

Application No Patent No	Publication date (day/month/year)	Filing date (day/month/year)	Priority date (valid claim) (day/month/year)
US 5 987 354	2.11.1999	18.3.1996	21.7.1995

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

Documents D1 and D2, cited in the International Search Report, are not identified in the description and the relevant background art disclosed therein is not discussed in the introductory part of the description, in such a way that the inventive merit of what is

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claimed can be readily understood (Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT).

Re Item VIII

Certain observations on the international application

The reference to the "spirit" of the invention in the description (page 10, line 23) is not in accordance with the dispositions laid down in the PCT guidelines (see PCT/GL/3-III-4.3a).

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 131038	FOR FURTHER ACTION see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. PCT/EP 00/11244	International filing date (day/month/year) 17/10/2000	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 29/10/1999
Applicant ALCATEL et al.		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 3 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

- a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
 - the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).
- b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :
 - contained in the international application in written form.
 - filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
 - furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
 - furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
 - the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
 - the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2. **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

- the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.
- the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

- the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.
- the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

- as suggested by the applicant.
- because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.
- because this figure better characterizes the invention.

3

None of the figures.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
3 May 2001 (03.05.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/31821 A2

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: H04J 3/08.
3/14, H04L 12/42

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(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP00/11244

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(22) International Filing Date: 17 October 2000 (17.10.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(81) Designated States (national): CA, JP, US.

(26) Publication Language: English

(84) Designated States (regional): European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).

(30) Priority Data:
TO99A000945 29 October 1999 (29.10.1999) IT

Published:
— Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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WO 01/31821 A2

(54) Title: SIGNALLING OF FAILURES IN TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS

(57) Abstract: A method for signalling failures in telecommunications networks, in particular MS-SPRING optic fiber telecommunications networks, comprising nodes connected through spans, that provides for protecting the information traffic on said telecommunications networks by defining a work channel and a protecting channel and switch operations between said work and protecting channels, said switch being driven through protection words exchanged among the nodes of said telecommunications network. According to the invention it is provided that the node (NE1) of the telecommunication network that receives a failure signal (SF) on an incoming span (SP) and is in a Lockout Of Work Channel (LKW) state sends modified protection words (PRW) in opposite direction.

SIGNALLING OF FAILURES IN TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS

DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to a method for signaling failures in telecommunications networks, particularly in MS-SPRING optical fiber telecommunications networks. Such networks comprise nodes connected through spans. The information traffic in said networks is protected by defining a working channel and a protecting channel and switch operations between said working and protecting channels; the switch operations are driven through protection words being exchanged between the nodes of said telecommunications network.

In present telecommunications networks it has become extremely important to have the capability of making up for the failures occurring in the networks without causing any impact on the operation functionality.

Therefore, telecommunications networks, in particular optical fiber networks, are provided with protecting means against failures of network elements or spans.

MS-SPRING (Multiplexed-Shared Protection Ring) networks, for example, have implemented a shared protection mechanism, which allows automatic traffic restoration also in the event of failures in the connecting fiber.

MS-SPRING networks provide for automatic traffic restoration through a synchronized rerouting of said traffic, which is operated at each ring node. This operation is controlled by a protocol consisting of 16-bit patterns, which are continuously exchanged between adjacent nodes. For obtaining more information about said protocol and the operations involved by it in relation to different bit patterns see for instance the current approved version of ITU-T G. 841.

Standards define two MS-SPRING network types, one for two fiber rings, namely each ring node is connected to another node by a span consisting of two optical fibers, which carry signals spreading in opposite directions to each

other; the other for four fiber rings, capable of carrying a higher traffic.

Fig. 1 represents a basic schematics of a network ring 1 of an MS-SPRING two fiber network. Such a ring 1 comprises six nodes or network elements NE. Generally, network elements NEs in an MS-SPRING ring may range from 2 to 16. Each network element NE has two bi-directional communication ports PO, i.e. each port operating both as a transmission and reception port. One of the communication ports PO is dedicated to the traffic transmitted in clockwise (or East) direction E, whereas the other is dedicated to the traffic transmitted in counterclockwise (or West) direction W.

Two adjacent network elements NE in the ring 1 are connected through a corresponding span SP, which span SP comprises two connections CN. Each connection comprises an optical fiber which carry the traffic in opposite directions, namely one in clockwise direction E, the other one in counterclockwise direction W.

In order to obtain traffic protection without too much impact on the band utilization, the bandwidth in the MS-SPRING network ring 1 is divided in two halves of equal capacity, called working capacity (or working channel) and protecting capacity (or protecting channel). In Fig. 1 they are identified by arrows of different colors, grey and white, which represent the connections CN. The working channel is used for high priority (HP) traffic (namely, protected traffic), whereas the protecting channel is used for low priority (LP) traffic, namely a traffic that can be lost in the event of a failure.

Protection in the MS-SPRING network ring 1 is implemented through a so-called "Bridge & Switch" technique, which technique comprises the step of re-routing the traffic through an appropriate modification of the internal connections of the network elements, i.e. transferring the traffic from the working channel to the protecting channel, on which protecting channel the traffic is sent in a direction opposite to the direction of the original path.

A Bridge operation will substantially let a node transmit the same traffic on both the working channel and protecting channel, whereas a Switch operation will select the traffic transmitted on the protecting channel instead of the traffic transmitted on the working channel.

Such a protection technique, called APS (Automatic Protection Switch) requires for each network element to have inside a device called APS controller, which is capable of detecting failures, communicating and receiving information related to the other network elements and actuating Bridge & Switch operations.

Fig. 1 indicates a protection controller CP inside the node NE1, i.e. an APS controller, which exchanges protection words PW with the other network elements NE. Said protection words PW are commonly called bit patterns and consist of two signaling bytes, a first byte K1 and a second byte K2. Each protection controller CP contained in a network element NE is apt to interpret and write them according to the events occurring in the ring 1.

As it is known, MS-SPRING network ring state can be modified by two kinds of event. The first event corresponds to network failures, which in their turn may be either Signal Degrade failures or Signal Fail failures. The second event corresponds to the commands by an operator superintending to the operation. Said controls may be:

- Manual Switch;
- Forced Switch;
- Lockout Of Working Channel; and
- Lockout Of Protection Span.

The present invention deals with the Lockout Of Working Channel command, whereas for the description of the other commands reference is made to the above standard.

A Lockout Of Working Channel command which is sent by the operator hinders the node that receives said control to perform a switching operation of the protecting channel. The node can not request a protection Switch of any type, even if a failure should occur on a span. Should any traffic already be under protection, the relevant Bridge will be suppressed independently from the conditions of the working channel.

Fig. 2 represents a more detailed diagram of a portion of the ring 1 shown in Fig. 1 under a special operating condition, so as to describe a drawback of the known state of the art.

According to this particular operating condition, it is assumed that a Signal Fail (SF) failure occurs in a connection CNE entering the node NE1 in the direction E, corresponding for example to a real break of the relevant optical fiber (span failure).

As a result, according to the current MS-SPRING protocols, a protection procedure is activated on the node NE1, which provides for the node NE1 to become a Switch node and send requests for actuating a Bridge operation in both directions, namely on the short path (West direction from node NE1), and on the long path (East direction from the node NE1). The node NE2 receives a Bridge request on the short path and will correspondingly send a reverse request to the node NE1 on the short path itself; therefore, the node NE2, upon reception of a Bridge request from the long path, will perform a Bridge & Switch operation, i.e. rerouting the traffic on the protecting channel and on the long path. The node NE1, upon reception of a reverse request from the long path will perform in its turn a Bridge & Switch operation for the completion of the protecting operation.

However, if upon completion of the protecting operation the operator sends a Lockout Of Working Channel (LKW) command to the node NE1 in the direction of the connection CNE where the above failure has occurred, this will hinder the node NE1 from maintaining the Switch operation.

The node NE1 is kept informed on the status of its connection CNU resulting from the protection bit patterns, i.e. the protection words PW mentioned with reference to Fig. 1, namely from protection words PRW1 received by the incoming connection CNE from the same side, i.e. direction E (short path) and from protection words PRW2, received by the incoming connection CN from the opposite side, i.e. direction W (long path). In the instance shown in Fig. 2, the protection words PRW1 coming from the same side where failure has occurred, i.e. the short path, are not available because of the incoming connection CNE has a failure by assumption. Protection words PRW2 coming from the opposite side, i.e. the long path, are available but the information they carry is a combination of the status of the exiting connection CNU and incoming connection CNE, i.e. they indicate a failure if at least one of

both connections CN has failed (without any possibility of understanding whether both connections have a failure); therefore, since the incoming connection CNE has a failure by assumption, no useful information about the state of the exiting connection CNU can be obtained, not even from the protection word PRW2 received from the opposite side.

If no lockout command of the working channel LKW is issued, the above situation has no influence since, according to MS-SPRING protocols, the node NE1 should behave in the same way, either in the event that only the incoming connection CNE has failed or that both the incoming connection CNE and exiting connection CNU have a failure; consequently, it is of no interest to know the state of the exiting connection CNU when the incoming connection CNE has a failure. On the contrary, when a lockout command LKW is given by the operator to the working channel, in which case the node NE1 is requested to ignore the state of the entering connection CNE only, the node NE1 should know the state of the exiting connection CNU, since its behavior depends on that status.

Serious drawbacks are caused by the above situation. In fact, if the failure SF is only on the exiting connection CNE, i.e. unidirectional incoming, in the event of a lockout command of the working channel LKW, the protocol provides as above for suppression of the switch between the working channel and protecting channel, whereas in the event that such a failure SF also affects the exiting connection CNU of one same span SP (ring switch), the protocol imposes to leave the traffic unchanged also in the event of a lockout command of the working channel LKW, i.e. to maintain the switch between the working channel and protecting channel.

Since the node NE1 has no way to know the state of the exiting connection CNU in the direction of the node NE2, its protection controller CP implementing APS protection is in an uncertainty situation and will initially attempt to suppress the Switch and subsequently restore it. In the event of a failure, this appears like an undesired transient.

It is the main object of the present invention to solve the above drawbacks and provide a method for signaling failures in MS-SPRING

telecommunications networks, having a more efficient and improved performance which is able to avoid the above undesired transients of the protection controllers in the event of a lockout command of the working channel.

5 The above and further objects are obtained by a method according to independent claim 1, a network element according to claim 7, a network according to claim 11 and a frame according to claim 12. The respective dependent claims set forth advantageous characteristics of the present invention. All the claims are considered as an integral part of the present 10 description.

The basic idea of the present invention consists in the step, carried out by a network element receiving a Signal Fail signaling on an incoming span and being in a Lockout Of Working Channel state, of sending proper protection words in opposite directions through the ring network.

15 Further objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description and annexed drawings, which are supplied by way of non limiting example, wherein:

- Fig. 1 shows a basic schematic diagram of an MS-SPRING telecommunications network;
- Fig. 2 shows a detail of the MS-SPRING telecommunications network of Fig. 1 in a failure situation;
- Fig. 3 shows a failure signaling string, which provides the method for signaling failures in telecommunications networks, according to the present invention; and
- Fig. 4 shows a time diagram of the MS-SPRING network in the failure situation of Fig. 2, using the method for signaling failures in telecommunications network according to the present invention.

25 As above mentioned, the protection word according to ITU-T G. 841 comprises two signaling bytes, a first byte K1 and a second byte K2. The first byte K1 contains two fields of four bits. The first field of K1 (BRQ) contains the Bridge request code. The second field of K1 (DNI) contains the information indicating which node 30 NE should accept the request (namely, DNI is the identification of destination node).

5 The second byte K2 contains three fields. The first field of K2 is a four bit field (SNI) containing the identification of the node NE that has generated the request (namely, SNI is the identification of source node). The second field of K2 is a one-bit field (LS) containing the path information (Long or Short). Finally, the third field of K2 (ST) contains the information of the node status. The third field of K2 is a three bit field. ITU-T G.841 sets forth possible values of the first field of K1 (BRQ) and the third field of K2 (ST).

10 Fig. 3 represents a possible protection word PRW according to the present invention. Such a "modified" (or proper) protection word PRW is in fact a modification of the protection words PW previously described, i.e. the instruction sent to the protection controllers CP located inside the nodes (NE1... NE6) of Fig.1 implementing APS protection. It should be understood that the PRW according to the present invention has the same field arrangement of the known PRW, the modification being in the values of BRQ and ST fields as below explained.

15 The method for signaling failures according to the present invention comprises the step of notifying the special condition of the node NE1 to the node NE2 of Fig. 2 (adjacent to the node NE1) which receives the Locking Of Working Channel command, without interfering with the currently installed traffic. The above step comprises the step, carried out by NE1, of sending the modified protection word PRW to NE2. The bit arrangement of the modified (namely, properly coded) protection word PRW identifies a combination not assigned by the above standard defining the MS-SPRING protocol, but conventionally indicating anyway the particular condition of the node NE1.

20 The node NE2, which has become aware of the special situation notified by the node NE1 through this properly coded protection word PRW, has all the required information for deciding whether to suppress the Switch, should only the incoming connection CNE to the node NE1 be affected by a failure (span NE1-NE2 affected by a span failure), or maintain the Switch should the exiting connection CNU have a failure (ring failure of span NE1-NE2).

25 The preferred embodiment of the modified protection word according to the present invention is shown in Fig. 3. The invention arrangement is obtained by inserting four zeros in the second field (BRQ) of the first byte K1 sent on the long

path, whereas the third field (ST) of the second byte K2 is written with the Bridge & Switch signaling coding, namely, binary 010. Therefore, the protection controller CP of the node NE2, which receives such a modified protection word PRW is conveniently programmed for recognizing such a combination received by the node
5 NE1.

Now the node NE2, being aware of the connection state CN exiting the node NE1 and entering the node NE2 through the protection word PRW that has reached the protection controller CP, may decide through the same protection controller CP whether to suppress the switch or not.

10 Fig. 4 shows a time evolution diagram of the ring 1 in the condition of Fig. 2, namely with a span failure SF affecting the connection CNE entering the node NE1, which has presumably occurred in the instant T0.

15 The diagram is representing the protection words PRW being exchanged by the APS controllers of the various nodes NE. In the diagram, the protection words are represented through messages M, i.e. bit patterns or protection words PW. The protection words have the format BRQ/DNI/SNI/LS/ST previously illustrated for the protection words.

Said messages M are:

- M1: Signal Fail Ring/2/1/L/BS
- 20 M2: Signal Fail Ring/2/1/S/BS
- M3: Reverse Request Ring/1/2/S/BS
- M4: Signal Fail Ring/1/2/L/BS
- M5: No Request/2/1/L/BS
- M7: No Request/1/2/L/BR
- 25 M8: No Request/1/2/S/BR

where L = Long Path, S = Short Path, BS = Bridge & Switch, and BR = Bridge.

The message M5 corresponds to the modified protection word PRW.

The message M3 is the message not received by NE1 due to the failure SF.

At the time T1, standard messages M1, M4 are exchanged, i.e. standard
30 protection words PW. As it can be seen, the modified protection word PRW corresponding to the message M5 is sent at the time T2 and will propagate through the nodes NE until it reaches the node NE2 at time T3. As it can be seen, the node

5 NE2 removes the Switch (going over from BS to BR) at the time T3 through the transmission of the messages M7 and M8 on the long and short paths. The node NE2 will thus start the switch suppression procedure, since the failure SF is unidirectional. From this time on the protocol continues according to the usual suppression sequence established by the MS-SPRING networks standard as previously mentioned.

10 Should the failure SF has been a bi-directional one (ring switch), the message M7 would not have been transmitted due to the missing connection and both the messages M2, M4 transmitted by the node NE2 and message M5 transmitted by the node NE1 would have remained, without any impact on the protected traffic.

15 The present invention further comprises a telecommunication (SDH or SONET) frame comprising a first and a second signaling bytes (K1 and K2) able to signal a Lockout Of Working Channels state of a network element (NE1) to a further network element (NE2) adjacent to a failure. In a preferred embodiment, the first field (BRQ) of the first byte (K1) comprises four zeros (0000) while the third field (ST) of second byte (K2) comprises the Bridge and Switch coding (binary 010).

20 The present invention still further comprises a network element comprising means for processing and identifying telecommunication (SDH or SONET) frames comprising a first and a second signaling bytes (K1 and K2) able to signal a Lockout Of Working Channels state of a network element (NE1) to a further network element (NE2) adjacent to a failure. In a preferred embodiment, the first field (BRQ) of the first byte (K1) comprises four zeros (0000) while the third field (ST) of second byte (K2) comprises the Bridge and Switch coding (binary 010).

25 From the above description the feature of the present invention are clear and also its advantages will be clear.

30 The method for signaling failures in telecommunications networks according to the present invention advantageously allows to remove the transient that arises in the node protection controller that receives a failure signal on a fiber and, therefore, a Lockout Of Working Channels signal. Advantageously, in fact, due to the fact that the node is not capable of self managing, the failure situation is notified to the adjacent node, which provides in its place for managing the protection and in particular a suppression or maintaining the switch between the working channel and protecting

channel.

It should be clear that the arrangement of Fig. 3 is one of the possible configurations of bytes. In other words, several different combinations of the fields of bytes K1 and K2 can also be utilized on both the long and short spans, provided they are not assigned to other functions, namely they are not standardized. In principle, also protection words comprising an already standardized coding (namely, a coding corresponding to a certain failure status) can be used for the purposes of the present invention. In this case, at least one bit (preferably one byte) of the corresponding telecommunications frame should be used for clarifying the different meaning of such protection words.

Finally, while the present invention has been shown and disclosed with specific reference to SDH synchronous signals, the above principles and considerations equally apply to other synchronous signals (SONET). For the purposes of this specification, any reference to SDH should be read in such a way as to include also SONET signals, unless otherwise indicated.

There have thus been shown and described a novel method, a novel network element, a novel network and a novel telecommunications frame which fulfill all the objects and advantages sought therefor. Many changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications of the subject invention will, however, become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering the specification and the accompanying drawings which disclose preferred embodiments thereof. All such changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed to be covered by the invention which is limited only by the claims which follow.

11
CLAIMS

1. Method for signaling failures in a telecommunications network (1), in particular in an MS-SPRING optical fiber telecommunications network comprising: a plurality of nodes or network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6); and a plurality of fiber spans connecting the network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6) in a ring configuration, the fiber spans comprising working channels and protecting channels, the method comprising the step of protecting an information traffic installed in said telecommunication network by carrying out Switch operations between said working and protecting channels, said Switch operations being driven through protection words (PRW) exchanged among the nodes (NE) of said telecommunication network, characterized by the step, carried out by a node (NE1) receiving a Signal Fail (SF) signaling on an incoming span (SP) and being in a Lockout Of Working Channel (LKW) state, of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) in opposite directions through the ring network (1) so as to signal the failure to the other network elements.

2. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) requesting the node (NE2) adjacent to the node (NE1) that receives a Signal Fail (SF) signaling and transmits on the failed connection (CNE), to verify the failure that has occurred and to take a protecting action corresponding to the failure that has occurred.

3. Method according to claim 1, wherein said protection words comprise a four-bit Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field, characterized in that the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) comprising an all zeros combination (0000) in said Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field.

4. Method according to claim 1, wherein said protection words comprise a three-bit Node Status (ST) field, characterized in that the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) comprising a bit combination (010) corresponding to a Bridge & Switch signaling in the Node Status (ST) field.

5. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) through the shorter path between the node (NE1) receiving the failure signal (SF) and the node (NE2) transmitting on the 5 interrupted connection (CNE), by using the likely surviving connection (CNU).

6. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) in the opposite direction to the one on which the 10 Lockout Of Working Channel (LKW) is operating.

7. Network element (NE) for a telecommunications network (1), in particular for an MS-SPRING optical fiber telecommunications network comprising: a plurality of nodes or network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6); and a plurality of fiber spans connecting the network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6) in a ring configuration, the fiber spans comprising working channels and protecting channels, the network element comprising Switch means for protecting an information traffic installed in said telecommunication network by carrying out Switch operations between said working and protecting channels, said Switch operations being driven through protection words (PRW) exchanged among the 15 nodes (NE) of said telecommunication network, characterized in that it further comprises means for sending properly coded protection words (PRW) in opposite directions through the ring network (1) when the network element (NE1) receives a Signal Fail (SF) signaling on an incoming span (SP) and is in a Lockout Of Working Channel (LKW) state.

25. Network element according to claim 7, characterized in that it further comprises means for interpreting properly coded protection words (PRW) possibly received by any other network element (NE1, NE2,...NE6).

9. Network element according to claim 7, wherein said protection words comprise a four-bit Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field, 30 characterized in that it further comprises means for sending properly coded protection words comprising an all zeros combination (0000) in said Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field.

10. Network element according to claim 7, wherein said protection words comprise a three-bit Node Status (ST) field, characterized in that it further comprises means for sending properly coded protection words comprising a bit combination (010) corresponding to a Bridge & Switch signaling in the Node Status (ST) field.

11. Telecommunications network (1), in particular an MS-SPRING optical fiber telecommunications network, comprising: a plurality of nodes or network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6); and a plurality of fiber spans connecting the network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6) in a ring configuration, characterized in that at least one of the network elements is a network element according to any of claims 7-10.

12. Telecommunications frame comprising a first signaling byte (K1) and a second signaling byte (K2), the first and second signaling bytes (K1, K2) forming a protection word (PRW) for signaling failures in a telecommunication network, the first byte (K1) comprising four-bit Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field, the second byte (K2) comprising a three-bit Node Status (ST) field, characterized in that the Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field comprises an all zeros combination (0000) and the Node Status (ST) field comprises a bit combination (010) corresponding to a Bridge & Switch signaling.

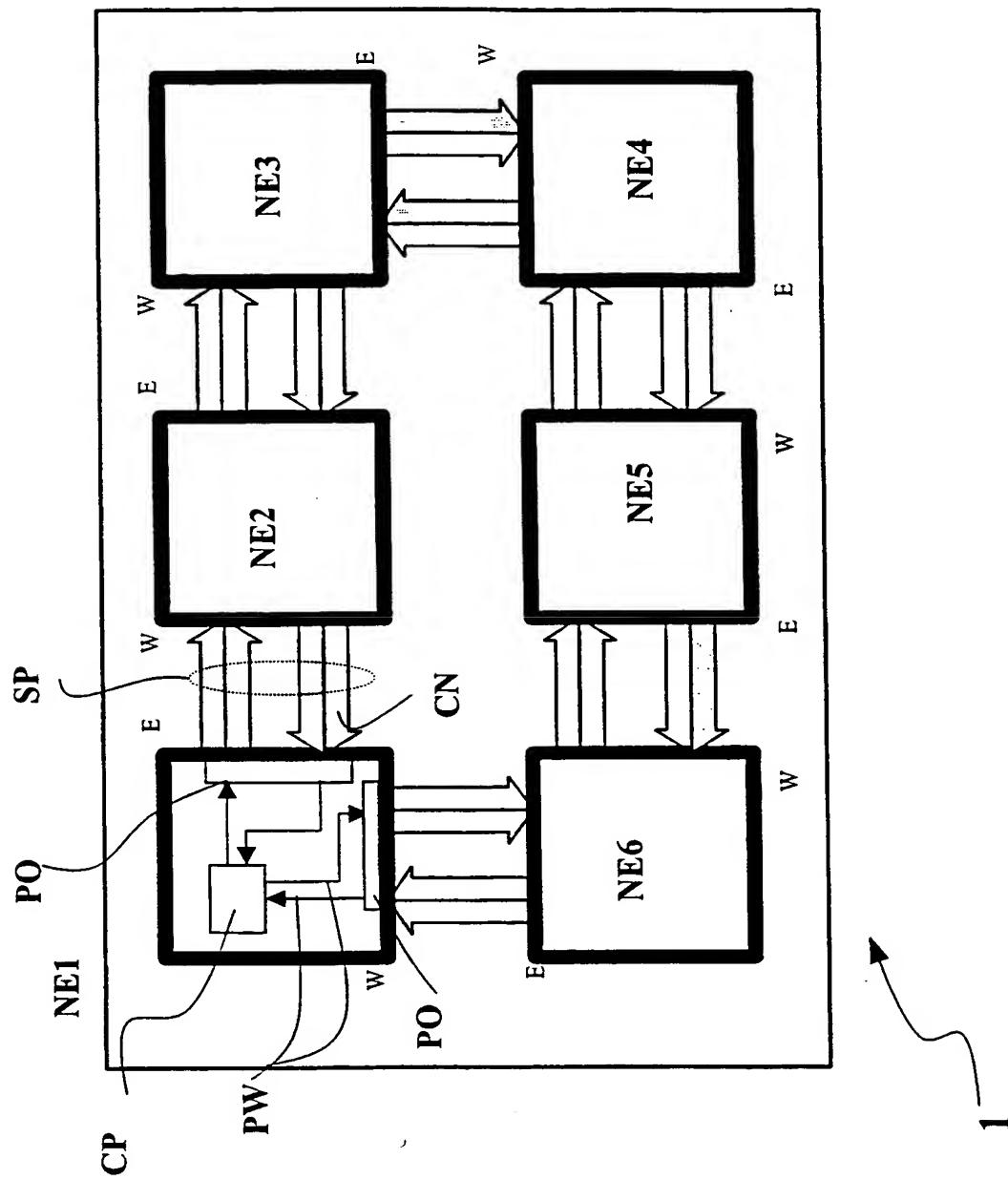
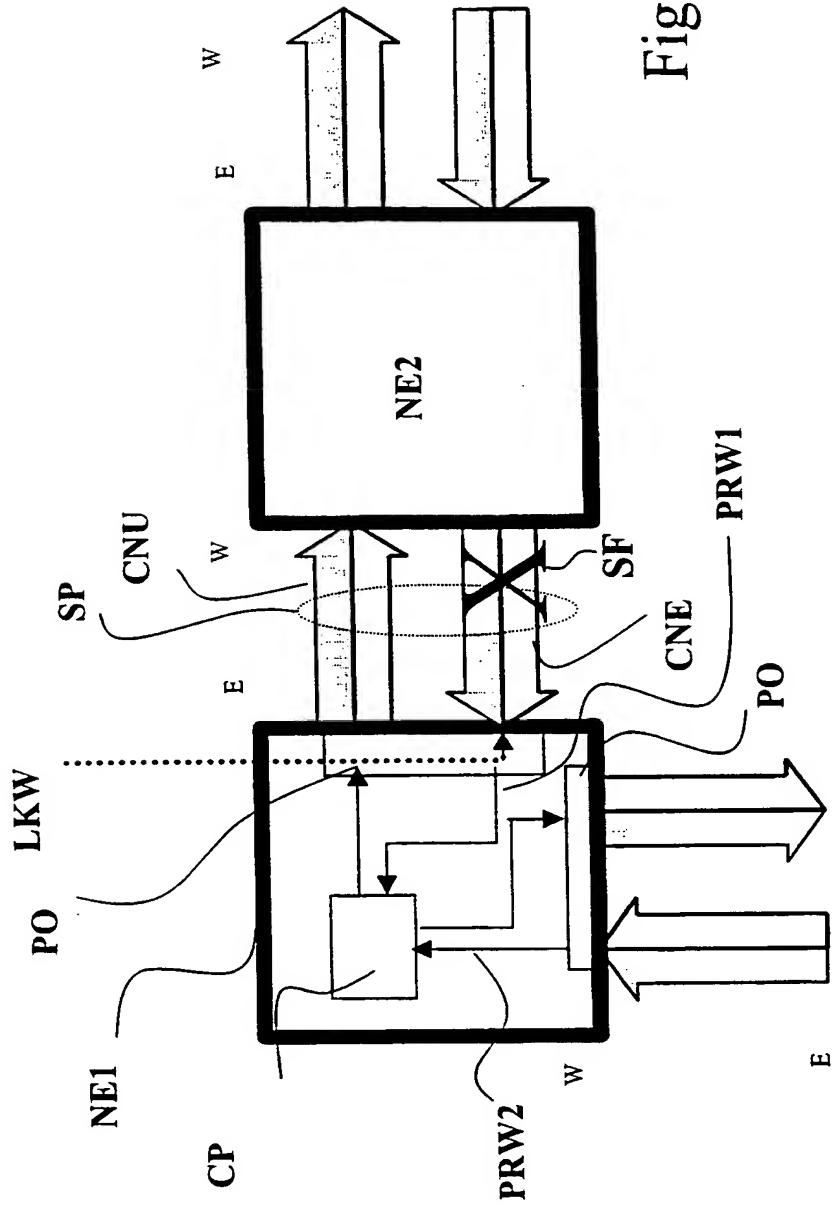


Fig. 2



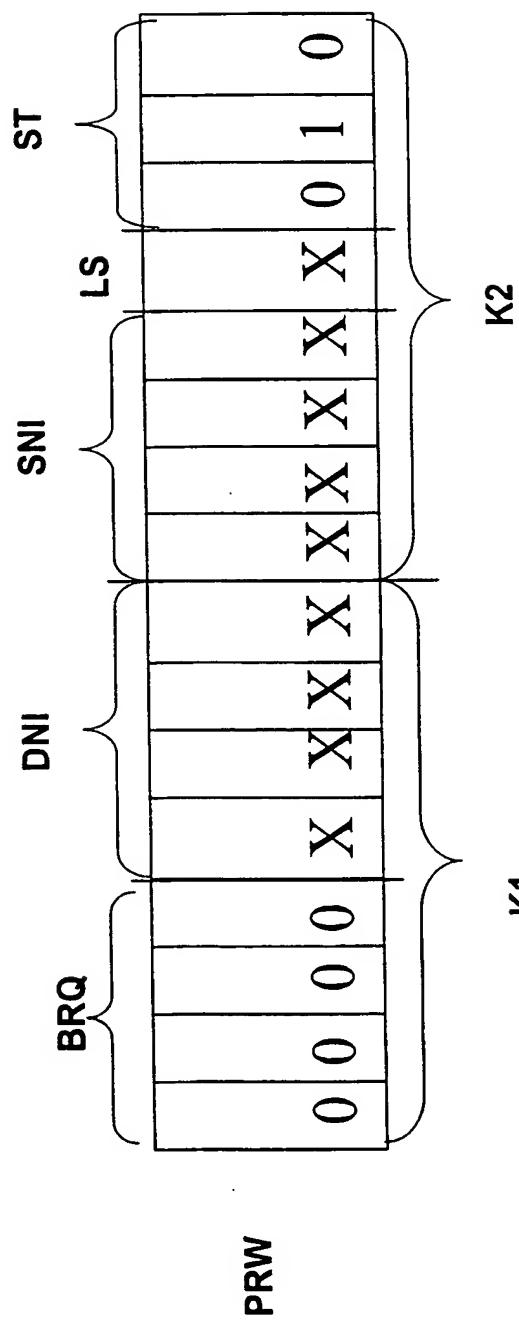
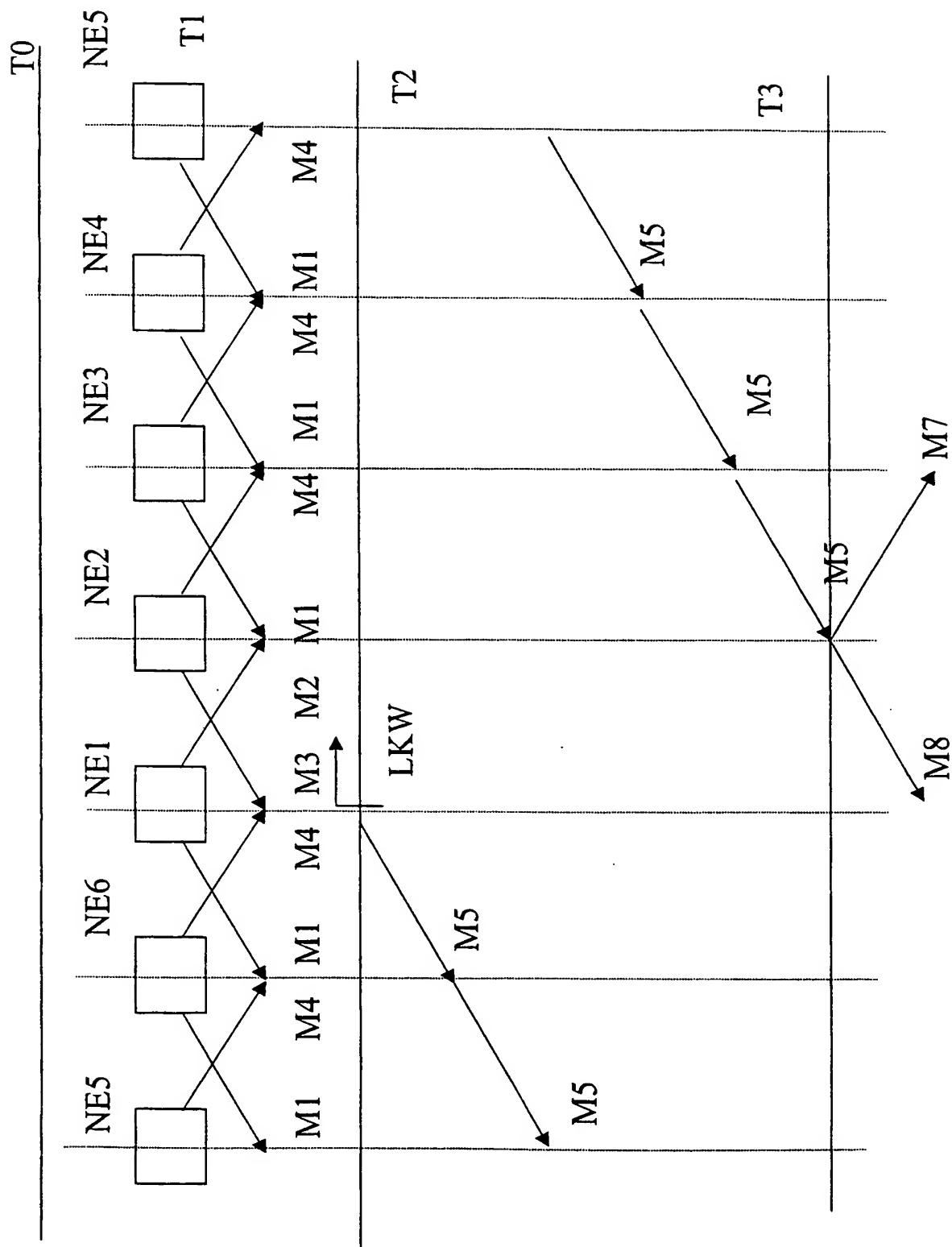


Fig. 3



(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
3 May 2001 (03.05.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/31821 A3(51) International Patent Classification⁷: H04J 3/08, 3/14,
H04L 12/42, H04Q 11/04VALVO, Gaetano [IT/IT]; Viale Affori, 7, I-20161 Mi-
lano (IT).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP00/11244

(74) Agents: COLOMBO, Stefano, Paolo; Alcatel, Intellec-
tual Property Department, Via Trento, 30, I-20059 Vimercate et al. (IT).

(22) International Filing Date: 17 October 2000 (17.10.2000)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(81) Designated States (national): CA, JP, US.

(26) Publication Language:

English

(84) Designated States (regional): European patent (AT, BE,
CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC,
NL, PT, SE).

(30) Priority Data:

TO99A000945 29 October 1999 (29.10.1999) IT

Published:

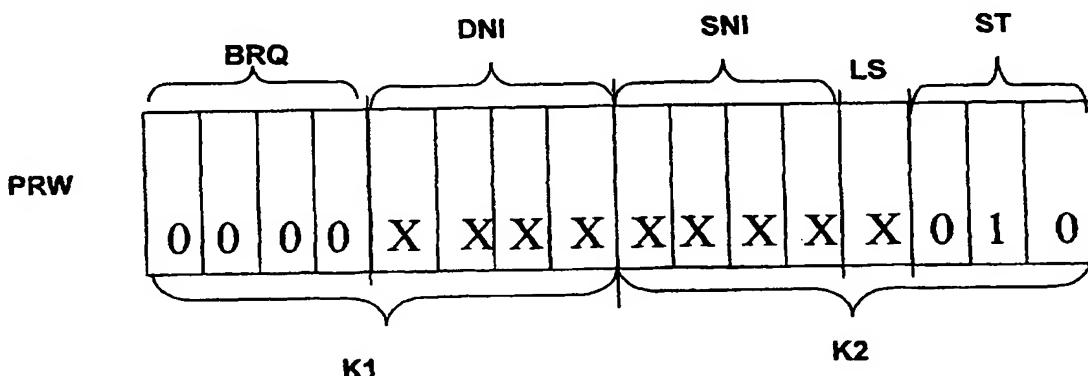
— with international search report

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TEL [FR/FR]; 54, rue la Boétie, F-75008 Paris (FR).(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
25 October 2001

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Ernesto [IT/IT]; Via Agnesi, 5, I-20052 Monza (IT).For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: SIGNALLING OF FAILURES IN TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS



WO 01/31821 A3

(57) Abstract: A method for signalling failures in telecommunications networks, in particular MS-SPRING optic fiber telecommunications networks, comprising nodes connected through spans, that provides for protecting the information traffic on said telecommunications networks by defining a work channel and a protecting channel and switch operations between said work and protecting channels, said switch being driven through protection words exchanged among the nodes of said telecommunications network. According to the invention it is provided that the node (NE1) of the telecommunication network that receives a failure signal (SF) on an incoming span (SP) and is in a Lockout Of Work Channel (LKW) state sends modified protection words (PRW) in opposite direction.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Interr. Application No
PCT/EP 00/11244

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 H04J3/08 H04J3/14 H04L12/42 H04Q11/04

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H04J H04Q

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, INSPEC, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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A		2-6,9,10
A	EP 0 818 940 A (NORTHERN TELECOM LTD) 14 January 1998 (1998-01-14) abstract page 8, line 11 - line 56 claims 1-3, 5, 6 ---	1-12 -/-

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

14 May 2001

25/05/2001

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inten	Application No
PCT/EP 00/11244	

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